

WONDERFULLY WICKED

Angelina Jolie returns with those magnificent cheekbones in *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, the sequel to Disney's 2014 fantasy adventure.

Words Gill Pringle

In a traditional fairy tale world where good and bad are usually simplistically drawn, *Maleficent* threw a fresh spin on the age-old question of what defines a villain? And, of course, those cheekbones, gorgeous horns and wings and glittering eyes.

So who couldn't wish for more Angelina Jolie in a role she believes she was born to play? Certainly director Joachim Ronning wanted more of her deliciously wicked creation, stepping up to take the helm on sequel *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil*, which also sees Elle Fanning reprising the role of Princess Aurora.

"Angelina created something truly unique with the first movie and with this character,"

“Angelina created something truly unique”

says Ronning. "It was a bold move by Disney at the time, creating a sort of anti-hero who you weren't sure was good or bad."

Of her casting as Maleficent in the first film, Jolie tells *STACK* she's come to terms with the notion she might be considered a "perfect choice" for this supposedly wicked creature.

"When I first got the call and they said, 'Well, we thought you were the only person that could play Maleficent, it was so obvious.' I wasn't really sure how to take that," she says mischievously.

"And yet, I love her. So maybe I just need to fully embrace it at this time in my life. When we first did it I thought I needed to find other aspects of her so she's not just completely wild and full on and a bit much and fun..."

"But now I've been through different things in my life, I was so happy to feel strong again and to have some fun. And I adore being her. There's something about her that now, I'm very proud that I'm associated with her."

For Jolie, the character of Maleficent has always been close to her heart.

"For me, these films are about family," she says.

"When Aurora and Maleficent were first brought together they became a family. They weren't really expecting



it. Maleficent was harmed in her life and she lost her self and lost her ability to be soft or feel love. And the love of a child, which certainly happened for me in my life, being a mother, brought out something in me that completely transformed me.

"But we are different. We are different creatures in this film. And so there are metaphors, and not to be heavy about it, but I always think a good film for young people has these messages. So there's a real question in the film: We get pulled apart. People tell us, because you're not the same, you're not family. Because you're not exactly like her.

You're not her mother. And that certainly strikes a chord with me.

"So now we see Maleficent question whether she's good enough to be a mother. And whether she is Aurora's mother. And in the middle of this film we go on different journeys and Maleficent finds herself in this idea of, 'Well, I'm like this. I was born this way. So that must be my true nature. I'm a creature and I'm like this, so I guess that must be my true nature.'

"And then there's a real push to say this is not how it should be. And this is not

how to live. And diversity makes us stronger; there must be a better way forward. And we have to come together – which we do in the film – with the humans, the creatures and the Moor folk coming together. We do that as a family and we come together and fight against this separation. We unite and say, 'This is the world we choose to live in.'

"Ultimately, I think the message is to say to everybody, be yourself. Be your true self. We don't live forever. We should tell our children: No matter what people see; how they see you or how they say you should be, you'll suffocate. Be your true nature, whatever that may be. And you will find a home for it. And you will find acceptance. There is no alternative." **S**

DID YOU KNOW?

The cinema release of *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* was timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of Disney's animated classic *Sleeping Beauty* (1959).



Elle Fanning as Aurora, Angelina Jolie as Maleficent and Sam Riley as Diaval

• *Maleficent: Mistress of Evil* is out on Jan 22